

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5224

SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

USMTM RIYADH IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 3216

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, YE, SA

SUBJ: STRENGTHENING YAR DEFENSES

SUMMARY: SEPTELS OUTLINE TWO FACTORS -- PAY AND US-SAUDI COORDINATION -- WHICH PROBABLY HAVE TO BE IMPROVED AS BACK-DROP TO SPECIFIC STEPS OUTLINED BELOW TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY SUPPLY PROGRAM AND YAR DEFENSES IN SHORT TERM. END SUMMARY.

1. RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO PROSECUTE A BROAD SCALE PROGRAM TO ARM YAR MILITARY, WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON ANTI-TANK AND ANTI-AIR DEFENSES PLUS EFFECTIVENESS OF ARTILLERY. THIS SHOULD BE DONE ALONG WITH PLAN TO SUPPORT FORWARD ELEMENTS OF YAR ARMY ALONG PDRY BORDER. EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE STRENGTHEN COMMAND CONTROL AND PERHAPS TO GIVE SMALL UNITS SOME GREATER FIRE POWER IN OPERATIONS AGAINST GUERRILLA BANDS IN ROUGH TERRAIN.

2. BEFORE STARTING ON SPECIFIC STEPS, BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT

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THAT NONE RPT NONE OF OUR PROPOSALS INVOLVE EQUIPMENT WHICH HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN PROMSIED BY SAUDIS AND AGREED TO BY USG IN FACT IF NOT IN FORM. THERE ARE ONE OR TWO SMALL RPT SMALL EXCEPTIONS.

3. TAKING UP QUESTION OF AIR DEFENSE, BELIEVE WE SHOULD ACCELERATE DELIVERY OF VULCANS WHICH ARE ALREADY DUE IN

JANUARY 1979. BELIEVE PRE-DEPLOYMENT TEAM SHOULD COME AT ONCE TO DETERMINE HOW, WHEN AND WHERE GUNS SHOULD BE DEPLOYED AND WHAT KIND OF SUBORDINATION WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR NEW VULCAN UNITS.

4. U.S. MOBILE TRAINING TEAM WILL HAVE TO CONDUCT ACTUAL TRAINING, USING ONE OR TWO VULCANS FROM EXPEDITED DELIVERY. BALANCE OF VULCANS CAN BE DELIVERED AS SOON AS TEAMS AND FACILITIES CAN BE PREPARED. SAUDIS WILL HAVE TO GET SPECIFIC AGREEMENT WITH YEMENIS ON INPUTS OF MANPOWER AND DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES AND WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO SPEARHEAD THESE EFFORTS THEMSELVES. THIS MIGHT INVOLVE BONUSES TO ATTRACT MEN WITH SOME SCHOOL TRAINING.

5. VULCANS DO NOT PROVIDE AIR DEFENSE BY THEMSELVES AND WILL HAVE TO BE INTEGRATED WITH F-5 PROGRAM. VULCANS PROVIDE ONLY IN-CLOSE PROTECTION. REAL AIR DEFENSE IS GOING TO HAVE TO COME FROM F5'S. SOONER SAUDIS SIGN AIRCRAFT CONTRACT WITH SCHEME FOR CONTRACTOR SUPPORT, SOONER WE CAN TALK ABOUT REAL SCHEME OF AIR DEFENSE FOR YEMEN. SAUDIS WILL STILL NEED TO BACK UP YAR FROM KHAMIS MUSHAYT. THIS EMBASSY CONSIDERS F5'S AGREED IN PRINCIPLE IF NOT IN FACT. AFTER THREE YEARS OF TALK AND F-5B TRANSFER, F-5E'S ARE NOT NEW EQUIPMENT. RED-EYES MIGHT CONSTITUTE ELEMENT OF NEW EQUIPMENT. WE QUESTION RED-EYES IN YEMEN BUT FEEL MEASURES MIGHT BE MADE TO INTRODUCE THEM RAPIDLY IF
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NECESSARY.

6. FOR ARMOR DEFENSE, SAUDIS COULD ACCELERATE DELIVERY OF 18,000 LAW'S DUE HERE IN NEXT SIX MONTHS. THIS WEAPON MUST ALSO BE INTRODUCED WITH U.S. MTT FOR TRAINING. THIS WEAPON IS IDEAL FOR ROUGH TERRAIN OF YEMEN HILL COUNTRY AND SLOW TERRAIN OF SANDY COASTLAND. WHAT SAUDIS WOULD HAVE TO DO IN ADDITION IS DISCUSS WITH US AND YEMENIS HOW THEY INTEND TO INTEGRATE LAWS INTO TANKS AND 106'S. IT WOULD BE NICE TO KNOW ALSO IF SAUDIS INTEND TO PROVIDE FRENCH MX30 TANKS FOR YEMEN. FRENCH WOULD NEVER TELL US, OF COURSE, AND NEITHER WOULD SAUDIS.

7. OVER SLIGHTLY LONGER TERM, WE MIGHT RECONSIDER DECISION TO CANCEL SALE OF DRAGONS TO YEMEN. HOWEVER, SINCE YEMENIS ALREADY HAVE WIRE-GUIDED MISSILE CALLED VIGILANT, SOLD BY BRITISH IN USE BY ONE UNIT IN YEMEN, DRAGON SALE MAY BE SUPERFLUOUS. IN ANY CASE, IT IMPORTANT TO FORCE TO SURFACE SAUDI AND YEMENI VIEWS ON HOW LAW'S AND OTHER EQUIPMENT MIGHT BE USED AS PART OF ANTI-ARMOR SYSTEM RPT SYSTEM. HERE AS IN ANTI-AIR MEASURES, MOST IMPORTANT THING WE MIGHT DO FOR THE SAUDIS AND YEMENIS IS PRESS THEM THINK THROUGH THEIR

PROBLEMS SYSTEMATICALLY RATHER THAN DEAL WITH PROGRAMS
AS SERIES OF UNRELATED PIECES.

8. ANOTHER AREA WHERE WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET EARLY
AND IMPRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT IN DEFENSE CAPABILITIES IS IN
USE OF ARTILLERY.

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9. SAUDIS TRANSFERRED RPT TRANSFERRED TWELVE M102 MODEL
105MM TOWED HOWITZERS TWO REPEAT TWO YEARS AGO. THEY NEVER
SENT FIRE DIRECTION EQUIPMENT OR AMMO. GUNS HAVE SAT IN SANA
WITH NO CLEANING OR USE FOR ENTIRE TWO YEARS. ADVISERS (PERHAPS
FROM JORDAN IF NOT FROM SAUDI ARABIA) COULD BUILD ARTILLERY
BATTALLION AROUND THIS SUPERB EQUIPMENT. M102 IS MOST MODERN
PIECE IN U.S. ARMY ARSENAL.

10. THERE ARE IN ADDITION TWELVE M-101 AL MODEL 105 MM TOWED
HOWITZERS IN TAIZ. THESE HAVE BEEN UNTOUCHED SINCE
DELIVERY OVER EIGHT MONTHS AGO THROUGH FMS PROGRAM. THESE
WEAPONS SHOULD ALSO BE CLEANED AND USED. WE SUGGEST U.S.
MTT FOR THIS ONE. IT SHOULD COME WITH TRAINING AMMO IN
ABUNDANCE AND SHOULD BE LINKED TO EFFORTS TO DELIVER
FOLLOW-UP AMMO IN SHORT ORDER. GUNS WITHOUT ROUNDS ARE
USELESS. FIRE DIRECTION EQUIPMENT FOR THIS WEAPON IS ALSO
NONEXISTENT. SINCE IT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT INCLUDED IN
ORIGINAL LOA AND HAS ONLY BEEN ORDERED RECENTLY TO

SUPPORT FOLLOW ON DELIVERIES OF FOUR MORE BATTALIONS OF M-101

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AL HOWITZERS WHICH ON WAY. WE SUGGEST FIRE DIRECTION EQUIPMENT FOR BOTH M-101 AND 102 SHOULD COME FROM TRANSFERS OF SAG STOCKS.

11. TURNING FROM EQUIPMENT, BELIEVE THAT YEMENI DEFENSE CAPABILITIES COULD BE IMMEDIATELY BOLSTERED BY DEVELOPMENT OF AMMO AND FUEL DEPOTS PLUS FOLLOW ON DELIVERY SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT FORWARD ELEMENTS WHICH MIGHT HAVE TO OPERATE IN SOUTHERN BORDER AREA THREATENED BY PDRY. SECOND, LOGISTICAL MAINTENANCE SYSTEM WHICH SAUDIS HAVE BEGUN IN ONE FASHION OR ANOTHER -- THEY WON'T TELL US HOW -- SHOULD BE PASSED ON COUNTRYWIDE BASIS, PARTICULARLY SINCE U.S. HAS ALREADY DELIVERED OVER 2,000 VEHICLES TO COUNTRY THAT HAS NO RPT NO MAINTENANCE SYSTEM.

THIRD, WE THINK IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL TO DEVELOP COMBAT MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT COMPANIES WHICH COULD OPERATE WITH FORWARD ECHELONS OF EXISTING BRIGADES. THESE COMPANIES WOULD BE DESIGNED TO SALVAGE AND REPAIR GUNS AND VEHICLES FROM BATTLEFIELD. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, NO SUCH UNITS PRESENTLY EXIST.

FOURTH, WE ALSO KNOW OF NO RPT NO TRANSPORT COMPANIES TO SUPPORT YEMENI MILITARY. PERHAPS SAUDIS PLAN AND YEMENI T/O INCLUDES SUCH COMPANIES, BUT WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THEM AND TEND TO THINK THAT LOCAL COMMANDERS WHEN ORDERED TO COMBAT JUST GRAB VEHICLES AS BEST THEY CAN.

FIFTH, IN ALL THESE COMBAT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS PLAN REPEAT PLAN IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT MEN IN FIELD. THIS MIGHT BE TOO MUCH TO ASK OF SAUDIS, MUCH LESS OF YEMENIS, BUT WE SUGGEST THIS IS CRUCIAL FOR ANY CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS AGAINST WELL-SUPPORTED SOUTH.

12. SAUDIS HAVE AGREED TO TRANSFER HELICOPTERS WHICH WOULD BE
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IDEAL FOR COMMAND AND CONTROL IN YEMENI TERRAIN. DELIVERY COULD BE MADE ASAP IF CONTRACTORS AND PILOTS LINED UP. IF COMMANDERS HAVE TO DRIVE TO MARIB, BEYDA, HUIJARRIYA AND BAB-AL-MANDEB, YEMENI TERRAIN GIVES ENEMY INESTIMABLE ADVANTAGES IN TIME.

13. WE THINK IT IS ALSO NECESSARY BOTH FOR REASONS OF MORALE IN YAR AS WELL AS SMOOTH OPERATION OF US/SAUDI PROGRAMS TO

CHUCK OUT SOVIETS IN YAR. SAUDIS SHOULD PRESS WELL WORKED
OUT PLAN TO REPLACE SOVIET MILITARY MISSION WHICH NOW MAIN-
TAINS SOVIET EQUIPMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, PAKISTANIS SHOULD
BE HIRED TO REPAIR MIGS, EGYPTIANS TO REPAIR PATROL BOATS,
JORDANIANS FOR ARTILLERY, ETC.

14. THERE IS ONE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WHICH WE MIGHT SUGGEST
FOR PURCHASE FOR YEMENI ARMY EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NOT RPT NOT
ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED IN EARLIER DISCUSSION BETWEEN
SAUDIS AND U.S. THAT IS M79 GRENADE LAUNCHER. THIS WOULD
GIVE YEMENI UNITS WHICH MIGHT HAVE TO WORK IN ROUGH TERRAIN
AGAINST GUERRILLA BANDS LARGE ADVANTAGE OF PORTABLE AND EASY
USE OF INDIRECT FIRE.

COMMENT: THIS IS A FOCUSED EFFORT BUT WILL STILL BE DIFFICULT
TO CARRY OUT. WE SOLICIT COMMENTS ON WHAT IS PRACTICAL AND
POLITIC IN ABOVE.

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